

Message Text

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SUBJ: HEAD OF HUNGARIAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH VISITS
THE UNITED STATES

1. ZOLTAN KALDY, PRESIDING BISHOP OF HUNGARY'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH RECENTLY RETURNED FROM A 30 DAY VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES, COVERING THE STATES OF MINNESOTA, NORTH DAKOTA, NEBRASKA AND ILLINOIS. HIS HOST WAS DR. DAVID PREUS, PRESIDING BISHOP OF THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH. IN ADDITION TO HIS ECCLESIASTIC POSITION, BISHOP KALDY IS ALSO A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, IS ON THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE PATRIOTIC PEOPLE'S FRONT AND ON THE PRESIDUM OF THE NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL.

2. UPON HIS RETURN TO HUNGARY, BISHOP KALDY WHO WAS MOST ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE SUCCESS OF HIS VISIT, GIVE A HIGHLY POSITIVE ACCOUNT OF HIS TRIP ON THE SUNDAY EVENING PRIME-TIME NEWS ANALYSIS TV PROGRAM "A HET," AND SUBSEQUENTLY PUBLISHED AN EQUALLY EXTENSIVE REPORT IN HIS CHURCH'S WEEKLY, "EVANGELIKUS ELET."

3. WHILE IN THE U.S., BISHOP KALDY CONDUCTED NUMEROUS RELIGIOUS SERVICES, LECTURED AT UNIVERSITIES AND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES AND HAD EXTENSIVE MEDIA EXPOSURE INCLUDING NEWSPAPER, RADIO AND TELEVISION INTERVIEWS.

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IN ADDITION HE MET NUMEROUS ACADEMIC, RELIGIOUS AND

GOVERNMENT LEADERS, AND BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH COUNTLESS MEMBERS OF VARIOUS LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS.

4. IN THE RATHER PROPAGANDISTIC TONES ONE WOULD EXPECT OF HIM, BISHOP KALDY REPORTED WITH GREAT SATISFACTION THAT HE SUCCEEDED BEYOND HIS EXPECTATIONS IN TELLING AMERICANS ABOUT THE CHURCH IN HUNGARY, AND IN "CORRECTING MANY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT IT."

5. HE WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED THAT HE MET MOSTLY PEOPLE WITH OPEN MINDS WILLING TO GIVE HIM A HEARING, AND THAT, PRESUMABLY TO HIS SURPRISE, THE U.S. MEDIA REPORTED ACCURATELY WHAT HE HAD SAID. THE MESSAGE HE DELIVERED WAS QUOTE THAT HUNGARIANS CAN BE TAUGHT RELIGION IN STATE SCHOOLS, THAT A STATE PUBLISHING FIRM PRINTS A HUNGARIAN-LANGUAGE BIBLE, THAT RELIGIOUS PROGRAMS ARE BEAMED ON THE RADIO, THAT CHRISTIAN STUDENTS CAN ATTEND UNIVERSITIES, THAT NEW THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES ARE BEING BUILT, AND THAT CHRISTIAN BISHOPS LIKE HIMSELF CAN BE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT UNQUOTE. BISHOP KALDY ALSO GAVE MANY REPORTS ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS IN HUNGARY.

6. COMMENT: FROM THE U.S. STANDPOINT, IT WAS INTERESTING TO NOTE THE EXTENSIVE HUNGARIAN MEDIA EXPOSURE GIVEN TO BISHOP KALDY SO THAT HE MAY ENTHUSIASTICALLY PROCLAIM HOW HE WAS ABLE FREELY AND FAIRLY TO TELL HIS STORY IN AMERICA. ONE MAY SPECULATE THAT PERHAPS SOME LEADING HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT OR CHURCH CIRCLES (TO USE A FAVORITE HUNGARIAN MEDIA EXPRESSION) DID NOT EXPECT THAT SUCH AN EFFECTIVE PROPAGANDIST FOR SOCIALIST HUNGARY WOULD BE "ALLOWED" TO DO THAT IN THE U.S.

7. FROM THAT STANDPOINT, AND FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE FREE FLOW OF PEOPLE AND IDEAS, THE GOH AND HUNGARIAN TELEVISION MAY HAVE, PROBABLY UNINTENTIONALLY, BRIEFLY PROVIDED TO FOUR OR FIVE MILLION HUNGARIAN VIEWERS A MORE FAVORABLE IMAGE OF THE UNITED STATES, THAN IS THEIR USUAL CUSTOM AND PRACTICE.

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